



WOMONSPACE NEWS

our voice in the lesbian community

IDENTITY POLITICS



JANUARY 1995

IDENTITY POLITICS, OR WHAT MAKES A LESBIAN?

by Catherine Gutwin

There's a scene in *Go Fish* where a gang of lesbians abduct Daria and interrogate her about the purity of her sexuality. "What makes you a lesbian?" they ask.

What makes a lesbian? It's a question we've all run up against at one time or another. Instead of 'lesbian', substitute 'woman', 'poor person', 'physically-challenged person', 'mentally-challenged person', 'gay man', 'African', 'fat person', 'transgendered person', 'Native', 'francophone', 'bisexual', or any other person who doesn't fit the mainstream. You now have the question that any justice movement faces in trying to define its constituency. It's an impossible question to answer, and it describes the dilemma faced by identity politics organizations that are trying to justify their existence *and* avoid being exclusive.

Trying to answer the question in its own terms—on the assumption that there is such a thing as a "true" lesbian (woman, etc. . .)—is a logistical trap. We fall into it because

identity politics are often perceived (and indeed, have acted) as political movements in the name of people who *are* the same, rather than movements in the name of people who have been/are being treated *as if* they were the same and lesser. For example, out of the latter formula came a feminist movement (and I like to think that in the case of feminism this is starting to change) that took as universal a white, middle-class female constituency, saying, "all women are like us. There is something essential that binds us together *as women* ." What is that essence? There isn't one. Whatever can be proposed as essentially female, male, Native, lesbian, gay, disabled, francophone, poor, fat, coloured, and so on can never be complete, will always be exclusive, and will always be disputed.

Movements or organizations that believe in and base themselves on sameness provoke the response, "This ain't *my* revolution, honey," and rightly so. There is nothing that speaks to us as strongly as our own experience, and if we can't relate it to the fight we're fighting, then we lose our motivation.

Lisa Kahaleole Chang Hall suggests in her article "Bitches in Solitude: Identity Politics and Lesbian Community" (*Sisters, Sexperts, Queers: Beyond the Lesbian Nation*. Ed. Arlene Stein. New York: Penguin, 1993. 218-29) that

Womonspace News is published by the Womonspace Social and Recreational Society of Edmonton. We are a nonprofit organization. The newsletter is produced by, for, and about lesbians in Edmonton and the surrounding areas. Our purpose is to inform and entertain our members and any other interested lesbians. The opinions expressed in any issue of *Womonspace News* do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Directors or the Newsletter Committee. The events, organizations and establishments publicized are not necessarily supported by Womonspace. *Womonspace News* is produced on a volunteer basis by the Newsletter Committee. We welcome submissions. Material submitted becomes the property of Womonspace. We reserve the right to edit for length and content, and to refuse publication. Articles or letters to the editor may be sent to: Womonspace, basement, 9930-106 Street, Edmonton AB T5K 1C7. *Womonspace News* seeks advertising that is lesbian-positive to help defer publication costs. Womonspace does not necessarily endorse products or services offered. We reserve the right to refuse ads. For rate information, and to place an ad, please leave a message on the Lesbian Life Line: 425-0511.

lesbian activists often meld community with some idea of home. She distinguishes the two ideas this way: community building for political action is coalitional, bringing many different individuals together to achieve a goal or goals; whereas home is constituted by the people with whom our identities overlap quite a lot, those with whom we feel comfortable. For Hall, community is based on difference—asserting the differences that discrimination ignores—and home is based on sameness—we need a certain amount of similarity to feel safe. Looking for home in the struggle of coalitional politics is a recipe for disappointment and for ineffectual, exclusive organizations.

Identity politics then, must always be a concept somewhat in suspension: we act up as *lesbians* not because we've pinned down what "lesbian" means, not because there is some essential lesbian quality we all share, but because bigots and institutionalized bigotry act as if there is. Consequently, Hall advocates that identity politics movements foster a more conscious sense of coalition: short-term co-operation to achieve specific goals. Such an attitude is exemplified by the direct action tactics of The Lesbian Avengers.

Some argue that focussing our energies on these sorts of tactics means abandoning policy and long term planning in social movements, and that we will end up fighting the same battles over and over again, starting from scratch each time. I'm not sure either that we can afford to lose our institutionalized bodies of resistance (GALA, NAC, and others), however non-representative they must inevitably be. It's important, however, for those bodies to understand their work as strategic and

provisional rather than definitive and complete.

What I do feel sure of (for now, anyway) is that while we resist lesbophobic stereotyping individually every day, we are more effective when we *also* resist together, and that such cooperation—such an identity politics movement—does not by definition have to alienate and exclude its supporters.

There is no longer a clear one-to-one correspondence between fashion and identity. For many, clothes are transient, interchangeable; you can dress as a femme one day and a butch the next. You can wear a crew-cut along with a skirt.

Arlene Stein, in *Out/Look*, Winter 1988

SUBMISSIONS WELCOME

Letters to the editor and other submissions are always welcome. Topics in upcoming issues:

February—Lesbian teachers
March—Partner abuse
April—Singles
May—Lesbians and the law

Contributors this issue:

Catherine Gutwin, Rosa, Alison, Charity Laboucan, Lindy Pratch, Noreen Marshall, L.J.D., Sheelagh, Leslie.

THE BUTCH

Rosa

The gay nightclub was dark and I was nervous. The gay friend that I had come with was dancing. He had accused me of being homophobic. I just hated it when people got the right impression about me so I had reluctantly come with him to this gay club to prove him wrong. I clutched my bottle of beer even tighter. *What* was I doing here with all these strange gays and lesbians? I'm not one of *them*! So what if I had had an intimate relationship with a woman. *That* was different. We had both been straight and well, we just kind of fell in love. I was positive that I could never feel that way about another woman again.

I felt uncomfortable here knowing that I was being sized up, knowing that women were possibly undressing me with their eyes and having unsensual, imaginary sex with me. I felt like a big slab of tofu! My worst fear was that some big, tattooed butch would sling me over her shoulder and take me home with her. I averted my eyes so that I could avoid any kind of eye-contact with lesbians. I didn't want any of them to think that I was coming on to them. . . .

I was in the closet! How I got there totally mystified me. I mean after all, I was an adult. I had had visions of having a husband at some point in my life. Never in my wildest dreams had I imagined having a wife instead. I had had dreams (though fleeting) of having children and of hearing the pitter-patter of little human feet. I never dreamed about going to the S.P.C.A. with a lover; "But you don't understand, we *need* twelve cats.

We're lesbians, you know?" Now just *who* had been censoring my dreams anyway? How could I have deluded myself for so long? I wasn't straight! But what was I? Maybe I *was* a lesbian. The thought terrified me. I had never met a lesbian. I wondered what they were like; if they were anything at all like me.

I finally met my first lesbian at my gay friend's birthday party. I was very intrigued by her and found her very interesting and attractive. By the next day I had convinced myself that I was totally in love with this woman. What I admired the most about her was the fact that she was so comfortable with her lesbian identity. A week or so later I came out to my gay friend and around the same time I wrote and actually mailed a note to this lesbian confessing how I felt about her.

I told my gay friend that I was bisexual. Somehow that seemed safer because I really wasn't sure anyway. And besides the word "lesbian" always kind of got stuck in my throat. You could have Heimlich Maneuvered me all day and I would still have the word "lesbian" lodged in my throat like a fish bone. I just couldn't say it! However, after three or four months I realized that my attraction to women had always been very strong. I was and probably always had been a lesbian. Although I had been with men in the past, it had been by default. I had never been attracted to men on an emotional or spiritual level and now I was no longer attracted to them sexually either. I was definitely a lesbian. How could I *not* have known?

Had I known that I would be happier, more creative, more in tune and at peace with myself by acknowledging the fact that I was a lesbian, I would have come out years

ago. As it was I struggled alone with the issue of my sexual orientation after my lover left me. I never seriously considered the fact that I may have been a lesbian. "I've made love to a woman but I'm not a lesbian," I would tell myself over and over again. "I'm just open-minded."

I've been 'out' for over a year now. I have only one regret and that is that I must be secretive about my identity as a lesbian with certain people, especially those with whom I work. I have worked long and hard to establish myself in my career and I will not risk losing my financial independence. At times I think of how nice it would be to be totally honest about who I am without fear of repercussions. I get tired of having to run every thought by my mental gay-editor so that she can edit out any lesbian content that I may have thought of sharing verbally with someone who does not know about my sexual orientation.

... The gay night club was dark. I ordered another beer and I forced myself to let my eyes sweep around the club. My friend was still dancing but the dance floor was packed and I couldn't see him anywhere. Just then they started to play one of my favourite songs. I wanted to dance! It was then that I saw her; it was the big, tattooed butch that I had feared for so long and she was sitting alone at a table near the dance floor. My heart was pounding! It was time to face her and overcome my fear. As I approached, she evaded my eyes. I stood there, swallowed hard and asked her to dance. She turned me down; she was straight!

BISEXUAL WOMEN AND THE LESBIAN COMMUNITY

Alison

The inclusion of bisexuality under the gay banner has been problematic for many lesbians. As part of the ongoing dialogue, I hope to alleviate a bit of the anxiety, and to challenge the spirit of lesbian politics. Let's remember that a focus on our similarities, rather than on our differences, can benefit both the bi and gay communities.

When I identify my bisexuality to lesbians, I often encounter a somewhat patronizing response. Here, we experience one of our most common misunderstandings. It will be suggested that my claim to bisexuality is really only a stepping stone in my coming out process. When I am finally honest with myself, I will be able to shake off my misidentification, and claim my true lesbian sexuality. While it may be true that some women, en route to discovering their lesbianism, have momentarily donned the bisexual identification, this is *not* the same case for bisexual women. After much self-examination, I have concluded that I am a bisexual woman. Difficult as it may be for the monosexual world to grasp the concept of bisexuality, it would make it easier for all concerned to respect and accept that sexual identity. A lot of energy can otherwise get wasted in challenge and defence.

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My girlfriend will get raised eyebrows from other lesbians when I make my bisexual confession. They will lean forward, and in hushed tones inquire of her if she really is okay with it? They think she must be very liberal-minded, knowing as they do, how bisexuals will bounce from the bed of a woman, to the bed of a man, to the bed of who knows what? Never mind that this assumption has reduced my sexuality to only sex. The real mistake is making bisexuality synonymous with promiscuity. That is not to say that some bisexual women are not promiscuous. I am sure some are, just as there surely are promiscuous lesbians and promiscuous straight women. Promiscuity and sexual identity are not the same thing and distinguishing the difference will help to clear some of the misunderstanding.

Some lesbians fear that including bisexual politics under the umbrella of gay politics will somehow dilute their fight for gay rights. I do appreciate that gay activists have fought long and hard, and it may seem difficult to share the battle and the rewards with someone who seemingly will sleep with the enemy. But think about it for a moment. Lesbians have suffered discrimination because of their sexual identity. Does it make sense for the lesbian community to then turn around, discriminating against and excluding bisexual women because of their sexual identity? What is the spirit of lesbian politics, if it is not to free ourselves from discrimination based on sexuality? Bisexuality brings challenges to gay politics that the gay and lesbian communities must be able to embrace in order that they can move forward and continue to grow and fight.

Bisexual women have gifts that we can bring to the lesbian community. We suffer double discrimination; that from two monosexual worlds. We can share that experience and bring our passion to the fight for rights. When you welcome us into your gay world you also make welcome again our lesbian lovers. When we take male partners, and still maintain our contact with the women's community, it is a reminder to all of the value there is in a woman-centred environment. Our ability to embrace both women and men offers another vision of how we all can be together.

Bisexual women do understand woman-identified sexuality. That is our common bond with our lesbian sisters. If we begin with our commonalities, both the lesbian and bisexual communities can benefit from an alliance.

TWO SPIRITED

Charity Laboucan

Assimilation, what does it mean? I am learning about the federal government's policy of assimilation. The government first put us on reserves in order to use the resources of our land. Reserves were also originally intended to accelerate the process of our assimilation. Eventually we were expected to shed our Native languages, our customs, values and spiritual/religious beliefs and become assimilated into larger society. Traditional tribal government power was replaced by the Western democratic elective system. After this shift in power we were ruled indirectly through our Band

Council. Under the Indian Act, which was first adopted by Parliament in 1876, then last completely revised in 1951, the Band Council has limited power. Under Section 81 of the Indian Act, Band Council powers are defined—which is basically the power to make bylaws. All Band Council legislation must adhere to the Indian Act.

The reserve system failed as a means of assimilation mainly because Native people were kept separate from society. Keeping us together kept us strong. In 1951 the Crown's policy of assimilation became a policy of integration. In essence, the goal was still to absorb Native people into the larger system.

Assimilation—what does it mean to me? In my blood I feel the weight of age-old oppression. I see my people struggling to overcome the effects of internal colonialism and to become independent of entrenched paternalism. I see my people struggling to overcome the wrongs and heal and rise up. I am proud to be Native and to be a part of this fight.

... sometimes I feel I am a warrior in these new times. Sometimes I am angry when I feel we are fighting a losing battle. Sometimes I wonder where my place is in this world, when I see that man who walks drunk down the street muttering in Cree. Sometimes I feel strength surge through me, knowing I am in a position to learn their rules and beat them at their own game. Sometimes I am scared because when I look in the mirror and ask what being an Indian means I cannot see the answer because my hair is short and I have no accent and fit no stereotype. It's not easy to go boldly alone here in the city—feeling cut off from my people. Hearing silence instead of combined

heart beats and the singing of my language in the air.

I have to integrate into the system, this world, this reality, in order to be a part of the healing and education of my people. But sometimes I forget the teachings and lessons I've learned from my elders as I embrace this world of linear time and thought, and money and power. I forget sometimes the purpose of it all when I ache for the silence of trees, and the time I have spent in silence with my grandmother.

Of course it is extremely difficult to like oneself in a culture which thinks you are a disease.

Chrystos, in Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back*, 1983

VOLUN ▼

Would you like to get into the Womonspace Dances for half price or **FREE** and have the opportunity to meet hundreds of gorgeous womyn? Call the volunteer coordinator at 455-1573 to volunteer for the next Womonspace dance.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Weekly Events

- ▼ **GLCCE** (Gay and Lesbian Community Centre), 104, 11745 Jasper Avenue is open Monday to Friday from 7–10 pm and Wednesday from 1–4 pm. Peer counselling, drop-in and library. Phone 488-3234.
- ▼ **Les/Bi/Gay Formerly GALOC** Social and political student group at the University of Alberta. Mondays, 6–7 pm in Heritage Lounge, Athabasca Hall. Phone 988-4166.
- ▼ **Adamant Eve.** Feminist radio program broadcast on CJSR, FM 88.5, at the University of Alberta. Thursdays from 5–6 pm.
- ▼ **Gaywire.** A lesbian and gay radio show from CJSR, FM 88.5. Thursdays from 6–7 pm.
- ▼ **Lesbian and Gay Badminton.** Thursdays, 7–9 pm, Oliver School, 10210–117 Street. \$1.00.
- ▼ **Northern Titans** (bowling for lesbians and gays). Saturdays, 5:15 pm at Lynnwood Bowl, 16127–118 Avenue.
- ▼ **Pink Triangle Youth Group** meets every Saturday, 7:30–10 pm at GLCCE. For lesbians and gays 16 to 21 years old.
- ▼ **Metropolitan Community Church.** Weekly worship, Sundays at 7:15 pm. Address is 10086 MacDonald Drive.
- ▼ **SOLO (Singles Only Lesbian Organization)** Social Club for lesbians and bisexual women (over 18) meets every week for a variety of social functions. Call 447-4776.

Groups

- ▼ **The Gay and Lesbian Infoline:** 988-4018.
- ▼ **Lesbian Life Line:** 425-0511.

December Events

Saturday, December 31

- ▼ **Womonspace New Year's Eve Dance** at Bonnie Doon Hall. For details phone 425-0511.

January Events

Thursday, January 5

- ▼ **Womonspace Drop-In.** Lesbians and bisexual women are invited for refreshments and talk, 9930–106 Street, 7:30–9 pm.

Sunday, January 8

- ▼ **Womonspace News Newsletter Meeting** at Boystown, 10116–124 Street, at noon.

▼ **Womonspace General Meeting.**

Basement, 9930–106 Street, 7:30 pm.

January 11 and 12

- ▼ **Go Fish** at the Princess Theatre. Wednesday at 9:30 pm, Thursday at 7:00 pm.

Friday, January 13

- ▼ **Queer Volunteer Appreciation Party** (Volunteers working for ANY organization) 7–9 pm at GLCCE.

Sunday, January 15

- ▼ **Team Edmonton Skating Party** at the Legislature (back lawn). Free.

Thursday, January 19

- ▼ **Butler Decision** Queer Academy, 4-29 Humanities, University of Alberta, 4 pm.

Saturday, January 21

- ▼ **Womonspace Dance—Mixed; Men & Women!** Bring your gay friends. Bonnie Doon Hall, 9240-93 Street, 8 pm-1 am.

Sunday, January 22

- ▼ **Ani DiFranco** at Myer Horowitz Theatre, University of Alberta, 8:00 pm. Ticketmaster.

January 29 and 30

- ▼ *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* at the Princess Theatre. Sunday at 7:00 pm, Monday at 9:30 pm.

February Events

Thursday, February 2

- ▼ **Womonspace Drop-In.** Refreshments and talk, 9930-106 Street, 7:30-9 pm.

Sunday, February 5

- ▼ **Womonspace News Newsletter Meeting,** Boystown, noon. Deadline for submissions for March issue. Topic: Partner Abuse.

JUST MARRIED

Lindy Pratch

Women dancing with other women is not an unusual occurrence at the Riverdale Hall. At tables nearby, however, there were males of all ages, from a small child to elderly men. Soon, the men joined the women on the dance floor. The occasion was the wedding reception of two women. Earlier in the

evening, Deni and Marguerite had affirmed their love in a holy union ceremony at Metropolitan Community Church. December 9 was the date specially chosen by the couple, because it marked their thirteenth anniversary together.

It was heart-warming to see so many members of the brides' families there in attendance, many of them coming from outside Edmonton. Deni and Marguerite have two children, now in their early twenties, and they presented a toast to "our parents, the brides." Friends and family members shared stories about the couple. Deni joked a lot, but she shyly screened kisses behind her cowboy hat.

The first dance looked traditional enough from a distance, with Deni in her western tuxedo and Marguerite in a stunning cream wedding gown. Then the women from the wedding party joined them on the floor. We witnessed some fine two-stepping, like you'd see at any wedding dance at a hall in the country, only there were no men dancing. Marguerite's daughter danced with her grandmother, Deni danced with her mother, and Marguerite paired with Deni's grandmother. In a little while, the men joined in, and the party was in full swing.

I feel fortunate to have witnessed this event. It is the first same-sex wedding I have attended, and it has left me with a joyous feeling. The celebration consolidated a sense of family for the participants, and gave hope for the future. Not only the future for Deni and Marguerite—may it be a long and happy life together—but also the future for lesbians in our society. There is a place for us in this world, if we have the courage to take it.

POLICE LIAISON

Noreen Marshall

In 1992, the Edmonton Police Service and the gay and lesbian community of Edmonton formed a Liaison Committee to promote a positive atmosphere of understanding and mutual respect that more effectively meets the needs of our community by addressing the underlying issues that result in misunderstanding, mistrust, and apprehension.

The Edmonton Police Service is committed to the fair and equitable treatment of all citizens including lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transsexuals, transvestites and transgenderists without bias, discrimination or harassment.

The focus of the Committee is to:

- promote effective two-way communication;
- promote two-way education and awareness;
- identify and resolve crime and safety concerns; and
- increase police awareness of gay culture and diverse lifestyles.

It is critical that problems and community concerns be identified and brought forward to the Committee so that they be resolved as quickly as possible.

Over the past year, the Committee has tackled a number of tasks including;

- developing a pilot course for the police on awareness of gay and lesbian culture and conducting a training session for more than twenty senior officers;
- reviewing the Edmonton Police Service Harassment and Employment Equity

Policies, both of which specifically include sexual orientation as a protected ground;

- selecting and acquiring for the police library videos, books, and other materials on the lesbian and gay community;
- working with the police, Edmonton Parks and Recreation, and the Glenora Community League to resolve conflicts arising over use of city parks;
- resolving reported cases of inappropriate police reaction to members of the gay and lesbian community;
- contacting and liaising with police services, gay or lesbian police officers and liaison committees in Winnipeg, Toronto, and Ottawa; and
- making a presentation to the provincial Review Panel on the Alberta Human Rights Commission and the *Individual Rights Protection Act*.

The Liaison Committee held a Town Hall meeting in November of 1994. It was very well attended by lesbians and gays. Over the past year, much of the committee's efforts have been directed at sensitizing members of the Edmonton Police Force to the reality of the gay and lesbian community. Many suggestions from the audience focused on what the community now needs to do.

If you are the victim of a hate crime, domestic violence or any other matter requiring police assistance, you should call the usual police phone numbers in your telephone book.

If you are not satisfied that the treatment you receive is appropriate or if you have a complaint against a police officer, you should

call 424-7248, pager: 293. Please leave your name and telephone number and a police member of the Liaison Committee will return your call. Service is available 24 hours. All calls will be treated in confidence by gay-positive officers.

If you require support or assistance in approaching the Police Service, please call Liz Massiah at 489-7998 or Murray Billett at 482-7421.

Community members of the Liaison Committee have also assisted lesbian and gay police officers in forming a discussion/support group. In addition to Edmonton police officers, the group includes members of the RCMP. If you are a gay or lesbian officer or if you know one who might be interested in the group, please call Murray or Liz at the numbers above. Again, confidentiality is assured.

Every man should own at least one dress—
and so should lesbians.

Jane Adams Spahr, 1988,
quoted in Leigh W. Rutledge,
The Gay Decades, 1992

Classifieds

Roommate Wanted Downtown
House, \$250 (incl. utilities) plus DD. Marlene
or Berni. 428-9454.

Barbara

L.J.D.

I brought my coffee to the table
and sat down under the Michigan sun
Tits in the breeze, totally relaxed
Til I saw her.

She was learning a line dance
A flash of breast as her denim
shirt caressed her body
The music stopped and so
did she - I remembered to breathe.

The music started again - the whole
number right through - and so
did she.

She was with 200 womyn
But she was dancing alone.

A faint smile was all that
gave away her pleasure
That and every single movement
of her body.
She was more than dancing this womon.

She was off in her own world
Enjoying her body's sensuality
Her shirt and skirt clung and relaxed
from her as she moved
Pure sensuality
The music stopped and so did she
I remembered to breathe.

NEW ARCHIVAL COLLECTION

The past few years have seen a dramatic increase in the activity and awareness of the gay and lesbian community in Edmonton. Landmark events such as the election of openly gay and lesbian city councillors, the Delwin Vriend court challenge, along with the impact of the AIDS epidemic, have focused attention on a segment of Edmonton's population which has become increasingly visible, vocal and organized.

It is important that records of these events be preserved. It is doubly important that these materials be gathered and placed in a single location where they can be easily accessed and protected. This is the goal of the Gay and Lesbian Archives of Edmonton.

Individuals and groups in Edmonton and surrounding areas are called upon to donate historical records and memorabilia that will give present and future generations a glimpse of the rich and vibrant history of this city's gay and lesbian community. Archival materials can include: records of organizations, active or defunct, operating in Edmonton and surrounding area; posters, books and periodicals; photographs, slides and

negatives; personal letters, diaries and papers; films, videotapes and audiotapes; artworks, buttons, t-shirts and other memorabilia.

With these donated items the Gay and Lesbian Archives of Edmonton plans to organize an exhibit during PrideWeek 1995. After the exhibit, all items will be donated to the City of Edmonton Archives which has agreed to house the collection. Future access to these materials will be processed through the Gay and Lesbian Community Centre of Edmonton (GLCCE).

If you have questions or information about individuals or groups that may have collections, please write to the address below. You can also help by making monetary contributions that will help pay for postage, storage materials and exhibit costs. Cheques should be made to the Gay and Lesbian Community Centre of Edmonton. Please specify that your contribution should go for the care and maintenance of the Gay and Lesbian Archives collection.

Gay and Lesbian Archives of Edmonton
Box 1852
Edmonton AB T5K 2P2
or call Allen MacDonald at (403) 488-5469.



BETWEEN THE COVERS

At the Edmonton Public Library

Lindy Pratch

New Fiction:

Flashpoint by Katherine V. Forrest, 1994

My Sweet Untraceable You by Sandra Scoppettone, 1994

Art and Lies : A Piece for Three Voices and a Bawl by Jeanette Winterson, 1994

Ghost Motel by Jackie Manthorne, 1994

The Case of the Good-For-Nothing Girlfriend by Mabel Maney, 1994

The Penguin Book of Lesbian Short Stories, 1993

Lavender Mansions : 40 Contemporary Lesbian and Gay Short Stories, 1994

The Last Generation : Prose and Poetry by Cherrie Moraga, 1993

New Non-Fiction:

Conduct Unbecoming : Gays and Lesbians in the U.S. Military by Randy Shilts, 1993

Coming Out of the Blue : British Police Officers Talk About Their Lives in "The Job" as Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals by Marc E. Burke, 1993

Created Equal : Why Gay Rights Matter to America by Michael Nave and Robert Dawidoff, 1994

Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe by John Boswell, 1994

New For Children:

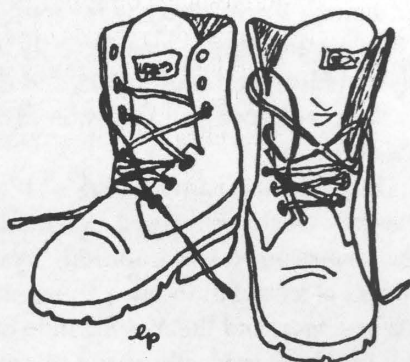
One Dad, Two Dads, Brown Dad, Blue Dads by Johnny Valentine, 1994

Two Moms, the Zark, and Me by Johnny Valentine, 1993

How Would You Feel If Your Dad Was Gay? by Ann Heron and Meredith Maran, 1994

"It's those two new girls on the block, Harold, something about the way they walk, something about the way they talk . . . something about the way they look . . . at each other . . . Harold, I could swear they're Lebanese!"

Holly Hughes, Louise to Harold, "The Well of Horniness," in Don Shewey, ed., *Out Front*, 1988



HEATHER BISHOP

In Harmony with EVM

Sheelagh

Heather Bishop has just released a smooth, tight new album and legions of her fans heard some of the best tracks at an Edmonton concert on November 26.

Daydream Me Home is a well-produced disc that illuminates Heather's eclectic song writing and singing ability. Its songs cover a range styles, from "Waitin' for you Mama", with its rocky guitar riffs, and the jazzy "Dream Line Special", through to "The Galaxy/Lighten Up", a Pythonesque-like poke at those who drive us crazy and the rest of us who tend to take life just a little too seriously. Then there's the hilarious "If you Leave me Darlin'", a tribute to this age of co-dependent relationships ("If only I could read your mind/I'd know how I feel... If you leave me darlin', can I come too?").

Heather's fans were given a special treat at this concert when she was joined by Edmonton Vocal Minority for some songs. The choir's presence was perfectly balanced against Heather's lead vocals, and EVM's background vocals and harmonies delighted the audience.

In particular, Kim Baryluk's "Warrior" was powerfully presented. A feminist song that draws on Native tradition, "Warrior" speaks of loss of innocence, the constructive use of anger, and the mobilization of political power. Heather sang this anthem with passion, as did the choir... "I can and will fight/I can and will a warrior be/It is

my nature and my duty/It is the womanhood in me."

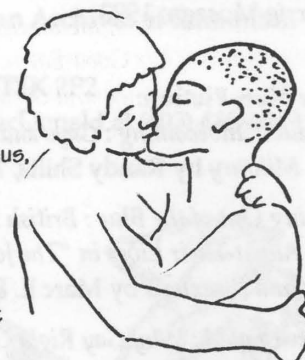
The choir was also great accompanying Heather with "Sheik Shaboom", an imaginative song with an infectious beat.

The album's title track is a warm, mellow country song that anyone who's craved to be back home can relate to. "Waitin' for you Mama" is more intense, an energetic rock/country piece about a desperate need for an absent lover.

Daydream Me Home is an uncomplicated album that focuses on love, honesty and strength of spirit. Heather speaks and sings openly of her lesbianism in a way that directly addresses society's homophobia. And so this concert was a shot in the arm for all who are angered by the Rosanne Skokes and narrow-minded Tories (and some Liberals) of the world.

Thanks to Heather and Edmonton Vocal Minority for a great performance, and Tom Hutchinson of the Garneau Theatre who provided free space for this concert.

Our sexuality is such a deep, spontaneous, and powerful part of our core identity that the conscious need to falsify it is a little death.



Gloria Steinem, *Revolution from Within*, 1992

BOOK ROUNDUP!

Ever find yourself wondering where you got that copy of *Lesbian Nation* that's sitting on your bookshelf? Well, check again and see if it belongs to the Womonspace library. *Lesbian Nation*, and the other books listed below, have all taken an extended leave from the library and it's time for them to come home. You can return your borrowed books at the next Womonspace dance, drop-in or general meeting.

Rich Rewards

The Ruins of Isis

Sudden Death

Amateur City

Daughters of Copper Woman

Daughters of a Coral Dawn

Dreams and Swords

Lesbian Passion

The Well of Loneliness

Rocking the Cradle : Lesbian Mothers :

A Challenge in Family Living

The Art of Sensual Massage

Herland

Anna's Country

Loving Someone Gay

Tottie : A Tale of the Sixties

Give Me Your Good Ear

Lesbians, Women and Society

Gay: What You Should Know About

Homosexuality

Lesbian Nation : The Feminist Solution

Old Dyke Tales

The Demeter Flower

Kindred Spirit : Anthology of Gays and

Lesbians

Trash

Clenched Fists, Burning Crosses

Say Jesus and Come to Me

Orlando: A Biography

The Coming Out Stories

A Woman's Touch: An Anthology of Lesbian

Eroticism and Sensuality

Lesbian Nuns : Breaking Silence

Ripening : An Almanac of Lesbian Lore
and Vision

Shoulder to Shoulder : A Documentary

Mrs. Porter's Letter

The Burnton Widows

Inland Passage

Desert of the Heart

WOMON SPACE DANCE

Saturday, January 21

8:00 pm-1 am

Bonnie Doon Hall

9240-93 Street



WOMONSPACE 1995 MEMBERSHIP FORM

Basement, 9930-106 Street Edmonton AB T5K 1C7 Phone: 425-0511

Confidentiality Assured

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Membership Fee: \$15.00 single, \$25 couple (with one newsletter)

Cheque or Money Order payable to Womonspace (low income available)

New Member ☐ Renewal ☐ I would like to be a volunteer ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please mail my newsletter to my home ☐

I will pick up the newsletter at dances/events ☐ Total enclosed \$ _____